

What is an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)?

ACEC designations highlight areas where special management attention is needed to protect, and prevent irreparable damage to important historical, cultural, and scenic values, fish, or wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes; or to protect human life and safety from natural hazards.

(From: BLM Manual 1613 – Areas of Critical Environmental Concern)

Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) Relevance Criteria*

Must meet one or more of the following:

1. A significant historical, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).
2. A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species, or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).
3. A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).
4. Natural hazards (including but not limited to areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs). A hazard caused by human action may meet the relevance criteria if it is determined through the RMP process that it has become part of a natural process.

*43 CFR 1610.7-2. BLM Manual 1613 – Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) Importance Criteria*

The value, resource, system, process or hazard described in the relevance section must have substantial significance and values to meet the importance criteria. This generally means that the value, resource, system, process, or hazard is characterized by one or more of the following:

1. Has more than locally significant qualities which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.
2. Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.
3. Has been recognized as warranting protection in order to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.
4. Has qualities that warrant highlighting in order to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare.
5. Poses a significant threat the human life and safety or to property.

*43 CFR 1610.7-2. BLM Manual 1613 – Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Special and Extensive Recreation Management Areas

Criteria for Establishing Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA)*

- Expenditure of major recreation program investments in facilities and/or visitor assistance.
- Structured recreation opportunities.
- Where congressionally recognized recreation values exist or where significant public recreation issues or management concerns occur.
- Special or more intensive types of management are needed.
- Detailed recreation planning is required in these areas and greater managerial investment (e.g. facilities, supervision, etc.) is likely.
- Size of these units is typically over 1,000 acres.

*BLM Land Use Planning Handbook 1601 and BLM Planning for Recreation Resources Manual 8320

Criteria for Establishing Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA)*

- Where dispersed recreation is encouraged and where visitors have a freedom of recreational choice with minimal regulatory constraint.
- Anything not delineated as an SRMA.
- Unstructured recreation activities such as hunting, dispersed camping, hiking, and wildlife viewing.
- Established recreation management objectives apply to all land use decisions within ERMA's (VRM, ROS, OHV designations, etc).
- Significant public recreation issues or management concerns are limited and minimal management, consistent with the Bureau's stewardship responsibility suffices in these areas.
- Detailed planning is usually not required for these areas.

*BLM Land Use Planning Handbook 1601 and BLM Planning for Recreation Resources Manual 8320